



# Omena Timelines

## Looking Back

In this issue:

The Omena Women's Club  
turns 100 this year! Join us  
in celebrating its many  
contributions to Omena

What Omena lacks in size,  
it makes up for with its  
many organizations and  
activities

-Omena's authors, part two



# President's Letter

by Helen Putnam Bradley

Dear OHS Members and Friends,

As your new President of the Board of the Omena Historical Society, I want to thank each and every one of you for your ongoing financial and volunteer support of OHS. Your support over the past two decades has ensured that we enter our 21st year fiscally sound and able to fulfill our mission to gather, preserve and display historical documents and artifacts relating to the Omena area, to present educational programs of historical interest for the members and the public, and to maintain a structure that facilitates the above and provides a meeting place for our members.

This year we have a new exhibit in the front room in honor of the Omena Women's Club (OWC) Centennial. Our Exhibit Committee, led by Joey Bensley, has created a replica of a tea room from the Sunset Lodge, where the first OWC meetings were held. The opening reception for the exhibit is June 28th at 4:00PM. Please read Alice Littlefield's *Timelines* article documenting the history of the club and its many contributions to Omena and the surrounding community.

Omena has become well known throughout the county and beyond for its unique Mayoral Elections and this summer is election year! Mayor Maya Deibel and Vice-Mayor Shimmer Disch, along with our Village Council complete their terms in July. All pets are welcome to run for office. We have even had a snail, Anemo (Omena spelled backwards), run for office. As always, Chicago rules apply: vote as often as you wish,

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## TIMELINES MISSION STATEMENT

Our purpose is to showcase Omena's past as we chronicle the present, with an understanding that today's news becomes tomorrow's history.

## COVER PHOTO:

Omena Woods in Winter by Jim Miller





## Omena Women's Club CELEBRATES 100 YEARS

by Alice Littlefield

**IN 1915** a small group of Omena women formed the Omena Women's Club to promote mutual learning and provide a voice for women in civic affairs. Meeting once a month in each other's homes, the club has exerted a continuous influence over life in Omena for one hundred years.

The charter members of the Omena Women's Club were: Mary Freeland, Effie Steele, Anna Powell, Abbie Morgan, Etta Anderson, Belle Patrick, and Mary Joynt. Like many other women of the era, they supported voting rights for women, along with education and philanthropy. Although we know little about some of these women, we know that Mary Freeland was raised in Kansas, trained as a nurse in Cincinnati, and with her husband, Albert, operated the Freeland Resort, founded in 1909. Effie Steele was born in Omena and raised on the McMachen farm at the corner of Overlook and M-22. Her parents were William McMachen and Jane Donovan. Jane's sister, Mary, was married to Rinaldo Putnam (who built the farmhouse that is now the Putnam Cloud Tower house, home to the OHS). Jane's other sister Sara was married to Charlie Joynt, so both charter members were nieces of Rinaldo's. Effie married George Benjamin Steele and they lived in the house that is now the home of Scott and Ruth Steele Walker. Effie was Ruth's grandmother and also Sharon McMachen Kalchik's great aunt. Etta Anderson's husband, George, was the son of A.F. Anderson, founder of the Anderson Store (the major supplier of farm families and cottagers alike from the 1880s until the mid twentieth century). Mary Joynt's husband, Adelbert, was a dairyman remembered by early cottagers for delivering milk to them with his horse and wagon.

Above: A meeting in the 1990s reviving hat wearing.  
First Row: Gail Lang, Annette Deibel, Ernestine Johnson, (?).  
Back Row: Liz Scheelf, (?), Trudy Lewis, Helen Jones, Suzie Mulligan, Mary Smith, Kay Silkworth.

The Omena Women's Club affiliated with the National Confederation of Women's Clubs, which supported the expansion of public libraries, banning child labor, passing food and drug safety laws, and other causes. In the OWC's first years they met once a year with the County Federation of Women's Clubs, which included clubs from Suttons Bay, Northport, and other area towns.

An initial goal of the OWC was to secure books from the Michigan State Library, but the women found that they had to have a man sign for them in order to borrow the books. Amused at this obstacle, two local businessmen, A.F. Anderson and Joseph Kalchik (owner of The Oaks resort hotel) agreed to perform this function.

Activities of the club in its earliest years reflected the members' desire to have their voices taken seriously in public affairs. Book reviews were an important feature. Fifteen minutes of each meeting were spent drilling in parliamentary procedure. This early foundation is reflected in the club's records, a century of secretary's reports, treasurer's reports, formal motions and votes (now available for most of those 100 years in the archives of the Omena Historical Society). Another early custom that persisted for many years was for the members to respond to the roll call with a poem, quote, or other item in accord with the topic for the meeting.





Nell Freeland putting fresh coat of paint on the rock pointing to the Omena Hillcrest Cemetery



Hazel Taylor, club member



Dottie Holmes and Ann Harper at a Strawberry Social



Mary Freeland, c. 1910  
Founding member of Omena Woman's Club

In a lighter vein, the meetings were often accompanied by a luncheon or dessert and followed by amusing games and contests.

Not long after the club was founded, the United States found itself entering World War I. OWC members made bandages and knitted socks, sweaters and warm headgear for "our boys" in the trenches of France. Local concerns were also a priority in the early years. Care of the local cemetery was one interest, as was conservation of Leelanau's natural beauties. Philanthropic activities were a primary focus of the club's activities throughout its history.

As World War II approached, interest turned to world affairs and patriotic concerns. Meetings included patriotic songs and flag salutes. Biographies of the Presidents and other famous people were among the topics discussed. A monthly meeting report was given on Asian countries and their importance in the war. The Club also became a focal point for Omena's contribution to the war effort. The Red Cross was a major recipient of fund-raising activities, and the women also used their nickels and dimes to accumulate the stamps that could be redeemed for war bonds. They tried to respond to requests for donations of tables, chairs, and games for the Great Lakes Coast Guard stations. The women also collected scrap iron, tin cans, paper, and other recyclables that were urgently needed for the war effort.

The Club continued its charitable work by providing Christmas boxes to the County Home, and also contributed to the Park Place Hotel Cookie Jar in Traverse City, kept filled for members of the armed services. By 1943, with the rationing of sugar and butter, fulfilling these commitments became more difficult.

Throughout the 1940s members of the Omena Women's Club discussed the need to create a memorial to honor veterans from the First World War as well as the Second. The war bonds purchased by the Club were



turned into a memorial fund for the Christmas tree plot next to the Fire Hall. The result was the spruce tree and memorial, dedicated in 1946, that still stand next to the Fire Hall/Community Room.

Patriotic themes continued to play a role in the activities of the Club in the post-war period. Program topics included women in defense, and "what democracy demands from education." Roll call topics included current events. School supplies and other contributions were made to alleviate the problems caused by wartime destruction in other lands. In 1951, club members voted to include in the memorial those serving in the "present crisis" (Korean War).

The Club undertook some new projects of civic improvement in the 1950s. Among them was creating a public beach for Omena, with help from the township and the Leelanau Township Community Foundation. They established a scholarship fund for students of the newly created Northwestern Michigan College in Traverse City, among the first scholarships established there. Numerous fundraisers were held: card parties, quilt and afghan raffles, bake sales, apron sales, and auctions. Charitable activities continued, including Easter baskets for county infirmary residents and Christmas boxes for needy families.

Through the 1960s and 1970s the Club supported a number of philanthropic causes and civic improvement projects, including adding bushes and trees to the memorial plot and paying for its maintenance. They also contributed to Leelanau Memorial Hospital, which opened in Northport in 1957. Dues were raised from \$2.00 to \$3.00 to help support these activities, although fundraisers continued.

As in earlier years each meeting began with the reading of the minutes, followed by the Treasurer's report, announcements, committee reports, unfinished business, new business, roll call, special program, and adjournment. Programs included book reports, flower arranging, and other topics. Among the books featured was *Silent Spring* by Rachel Carson. In 1962-63 the members decided to serve dessert rather than luncheons at most meetings. It became the custom that the hostess would provide her home for the meeting, while a co-hostess would provide the dessert.



OWC Trillium Logo

Although Club members concerned themselves with world affairs, their meetings were not somber occasions. Rather, games and informal socializing also provided a source of entertainment for the women. A special celebration was held in 1965 to mark the Club's 50th anniversary. Ruth Craker presented a report on the early history of Omena and a summary of events from 1915 to 1965. Unfortunately, her paper has not survived.



Ruth Craker, c. 1970

In 1973, the Leelanau County Federation of Women's Clubs disbanded, and its funds were divided among the six clubs in the county. OWC used its share to establish a "Big Sister Fund" to assist with the needs of elderly women in the community. The next year OWC decided to terminate its affiliation with the national federation, as well, because membership required turning over half their dues. In leaving the national organization, Omena's women were participating in a nationwide decline in traditional women's clubs. As more and more women entered the paid labor force, they had less time for the clubs that gathered on weekdays for outings, lunches, or desserts. The membership of the General Federation of Women's Clubs peaked at 850,000 in 1955, and declined to about 100,000 by the 21st century.

The Omena Women's Club weathered the winds of change, partly through the commitment of Ruth Freeland Carmody and Ernestine Freeland Johnson, daughters of charter member Mary Freeland, and their sister-in-law, Nellie Freeland. Suzie Mulligan, who joined the club during this period and served



as President in 1984, described these women as the dynamos of the Club. Another member who stood out in this era was Hazel Clark Taylor. She began spending summers in Omena in 1948, after working as a director of education and recreation programs for the WPA, teaching English at the University of the Philippines, and serving as Public Relations Director for the Women's Army Air Corps during World War II.

The focus on local philanthropy and civic improvement continued. During the 1980s the Club donated funds to Leelanau Memorial Hospital and began providing flower baskets every May for the 60 or so people in long-term care at the Hospital. Donations were also made to scholarships, the American Cancer Society, the Humane Society, renovation of the Traverse City Opera House, and expanding the community room at the Fire Hall. Funds for these contributions were raised by holding auctions and rummage sales and by increasing the dues from \$3.00 to \$5.00.



Left: Ruth Freeland Carmondy with Dorothy Holmes  
Right: Ernestine Freeland Johnson. Daughters of Mary Freeland.  
OWC meeting, c. 1992



Among the roll call responses in 1989 were "encounters with police" and "most embarrassing faux pas." Austin Jones was invited to speak on AIDS (1989) and Kay Charter on saving birds (1993). Members took turns presenting mini-autobiographies during this era, a practice that continued into the 2000s.

As the Omena Women's Club entered the new millennium, their charitable contributions began to include many of the local organizations we are familiar with today. In August of 2000, members approved donations to Omena Woods (\$300), Cherryland Humane Society (\$100), Leelanau Christian Neighbors (\$100), and Crop Walk (\$50). In September of 2001 a donation

was made to the Red Cross disaster fund, very likely a response to the attacks of September 11 of that year. In 2003 dues were increased from \$10 to \$20 and contributions were made to the Leelanau Conservancy, Leelanau Historical Museum, Crop Walk, Omena Historical Society, and Inland Seas. Donations in 2004 included Music in the Park, a

scholarship for Shady Trails Camp, Omena Historical Society Museum, Saving Birds Thru Habitat, and the Omena Village Preservation Association.

With the passage of time, many of these organizations matured and developed such effective fund-raising strategies of their own that the OWC decided it was important to pivot their focus toward those more needy or those not served by other organizations. For several years monetary contributions of \$200 and \$300 were made at Christmas time to a few area families in need. In 2012, long-time member Mary Stanton suggested that the Club support "Blessings in a Backpack," a nation-wide program to supply food packages to school children who would otherwise go hungry on weekends. Mary had taken the lead in setting up a local affiliate of this program to serve children in Leelanau County. The project was embraced by the OWC, whose members take turns helping to pack and transport the packages designated for Northport Schools and the Leelanau Children's Center

By this time the Club usually met from March to November, with maximum attendance during the summer when seasonal residents and snowbirds were present. Reflecting the changing demographics of Omena, there was a gradual shift in the membership from a majority of women on local farm and small business families to an increasing number of women who were long-term summer residents or who moved to Omena as retirees.

From the 1980s on, the Club organized trips to museums (e.g., the Dennon Museum, Music House Museum), historical sites, and other area points of interest, often accompanied by lunch in a restaurant. One of the favorites was a visit to Gwen Frostic's studio and gift shop near Beulah. Outings of this sort have remained popular up to the present time.

Meetings included both amusing and serious topics.



each during the school year.

At one hundred years of existence, the Omena Women's Club continues to flourish and attract new members. Their activities in philanthropy and mutual education persist and they continue to enjoy each other's company and the excellent desserts served by the hostesses. The Omena Women's Club is inviting the public to come to their **Centennial Celebration Luncheon and Fashion Show at the Omena Traverse Yacht Club on Tuesday, August 18 at noon.** The event will also benefit the Leelanau County Senior Services. Omena Women's Club

members are selling tickets for the event. Tickets are also at Mary Kent's Boutique in Northport and the Tamarack Gallery in Omena. The Omena Historical Society will feature a special exhibit on the Omena Women's Club at the Putnam Cloud Tower House Museum.

(Sources: Omena Women's Club minutes and records in the archives of the Omena Historical Society; *The Omena Women's Club 1915-2000*, a booklet prepared by the OWC for the Leelanau 2000 Project of the Leelanau Historical Museum; an interview with Suzie Mulligan, February 2015; Amanda J. Holmes, *Omena: A Place in Time*.)



OWC Mayoral Parade Participation  
Left to right: Julie Krist, Marsha Buehler, Gail Lang, Marcia Biscupski, Alice Hauske, Kathy Turner, Cate Varley



Making Gift Baskets for Long Term Care Residents



our of the New Traverse City Mall, Ginny Johnson, Connie Whittlesley, (?)



1986 Fashion Show  
Irma Lang, Connie Whittlesley, Amanda Holmes



# Herbal Renewal



Herbal Renewal Club of Omena:  
Liz Porter, Julie Krist, Janet Dickerson, Lin Emmert,  
Cathy Look, Jan MacDonald

by Julie Krist

**BACK IN SEPTEMBER OF 2000**, Julie Krist of Omena and Lonnie Morley of Northport met to discuss forming an herb study group, which has since become known as Herbal Renewal. Both women had been long time members of the Michigan Herb Associates, a state-wide organization, and also members of their local herb groups downstate prior to moving north.

They felt a need to establish a local group here in beautiful Leelanau County.

The first meeting was held at the home of Judy Balas on November 1, 2000. Since then, this group has been meeting monthly throughout the years on the first Wednesday at 9:30 am. Meetings are often held in members' homes, beginning with "Coffee/Tea and Talk", along with delicious refreshments. Next comes the business meeting and a monograph given by a member on the herb of her choice. An herb-related program, given by a member or invited speaker, completes the meeting. They often "hit the road" to explore the many interesting herb-related businesses throughout the surrounding area. The July/August meeting is an all-day road trip, generally to an herb farm to gather those most desirable herb plants and treasures. The December meeting is a luncheon and gift exchange that has been held in members' homes and more recently at some of the notable eateries in the area. In December, 2015, they will gather at the historic Wellington Inn in Traverse City.

In the summer of 2004, they began with the first plantings to establish an herb garden, "Herbs by the Bay," in Omena, located across from the public beach. Two large trees loomed over the garden area and the county

was kind enough to come and trim them up to afford more sunlight to the garden. Over the years, neighbors Pat Bourdo and Keith Disselkoe have been kind enough to provide the gardeners with much-needed water so we didn't have to hand-carry it from the bay. At some point, the two large trees died, so now the garden is bathed in much desired sunlight. In 2009, member Janet Dickerson offered to oversee the garden operations and she added many spring bulbs, as well as native plants, to enhance the garden area. Under Janet's guidance, members gather for spring and fall clean-up days and watering throughout the growing season. Thanks to Jim Miller for the lovely garden sign and the many pictures he has taken of the garden.

Over the years, Herbal Renewal has reached out to the community by hosting five annual Community Teas held in June. Initially held at the Omena Traverse Yacht Club, in recent years they have been at the Old Art Building in Leland. Members bring out their most treasured linens and china to set beautiful tables for the occasion. Tea is served along with savories and sweets to delight the guests. Guest speakers are invited to complete a delightful afternoon. Many thanks to those who have worked so hard to make these teas a special memory for so many. Monies raised from the teas have been donated back into the many community gardens.

Herbal Renewal always welcomes new members. If you have a desire to join the group, please contact one of the two current presidents: Lin Emmert at [linemmert@hotmail.com](mailto:linemmert@hotmail.com) or Joan Blount at [beauandbelle@hotmail.com](mailto:beauandbelle@hotmail.com). Herbs can add that special touch to so many aspects of our lives.





## OBS

by Dick Kennedy

**WHO ARE THOSE GUYS** who gather every Friday morning in a secluded corner at the Village Inn in Suttons Bay? Despite their attempts to stay below the radar, well-informed sources share that these questionable characters are members of the Omena Breakfast Society (OBS), gathering for their weekly meeting to review some of the world's weightiest problems.

History shows that the group was started in 2000 by five restless Omena residents who felt they needed to have a venue for some serious discussion. Why meet in Suttons Bay?

There are not many, if any, options to meet for breakfast in Omena. The owner of the Village Inn wanted their patronage, so invited them to use what was then a

private dining room. The gathering has since moved to the rear of the bar near the pool table wing. Mugs are stored on an impressive rack, each bearing the member's name, plus the organization's symbolic logo (shown above).

Membership is open to all males who pass the rigorous admission criteria. There is a carefully crafted mission statement with specific goals to guide members' activities. Political endorsements are forbidden, as are presentations by politicians.

Currently, the group has grown to over 30 members, with the greatest attendance in the summer months. The group is closely monitored by its long-term waitress, Donna, who knows everyone's favorite dish and watches out

for dietary restrictions. As she observes, "I don't want any of my boys leaving here in the EMS unit".

The group has participated over the years in Omena events such as parades, and has also gathered during holidays for a lovely dinner party with their spouses. Membership has expanded far and wide with members coming from outside the Omena community, after learning about its camaraderie.

While it may be difficult - if not impossible - to measure the many contributions the members have made in the past years of the society's existence, it is safe to say that all have a reasonably good idea of what they are doing every Friday morning: OBS-ing!!



## Omena-Traverse Yacht Club

by Mary Tonneberger

**FROM THE TIME** that Peter Dougherty remarked that the site where the yacht club now stands was a "good landing spot", the property at the end of what is now Firelane 3 (known on the county road map as Manitowab Avenue), has been very central to Omena life. The Anderson brothers spearheaded building the resort dock at the site in the 1890s to service those who visited the newly developing hotels. In 1911, the resort proprietors felt there was a need for a community social center separate from their individual hotel properties and so, in 1911, they sponsored building the Pavilion, the building we know today as OTYC. During the intervening years up until the Depression, it was the site of many social activities sponsored by the resorters and townspeople, who produced a wide range of musical and dramatic

events to keep the resort area as a key destination point in northern Michigan.

Fast forward through the 1920s when John Santo became owner of the building but sold it to Hector Carmichael in 1929. During the Depression, the building was boarded up and lay idle until 1947. That summer, Jane Newland of Ingalls Bay and Gus Rogers were sailing Lightening sailboats and decided that young people needed a sailing group and a place to meet.

On August 6, 1947, twenty young people, forebears of many current members, met with Hector Carmichael and proposed he let them use the Pavilion for their social gatherings. For one dollar, he allowed use of the building for that year with the stipulation that there would be no use of alcohol or an adjacent boathouse. The focus was to be on boating.

The group needed to raise \$2000 by the end of 1947 to purchase the building. Their first meeting in the clubhouse was July 6, 1948; Omena-Traverse Yacht Club was incorporated in February, 1949 with 38 members.

Obviously, the money arrived in time.

Today, OTYC is a thriving membership organization with descendants of many summer families being current members. At the most recent annual meeting, the Membership Chair reported there were 185 memberships, representing 305 people. While yachts are not frequently moored, the social life is quite active for the three month season (Memorial Day - Labor Day) with parties, dinners, potlucks, a youth program, and sailing races.



# Club 21

by Marsha Buehler

**CLUB 21** has a very interesting history in the evolution of women's independence. While it is not as old as the Omena Women's Club, it was founded in 1957, with many similarities. Club 21 has bylaws and an order of business, and the meetings begin with recitation of the Collect for Women by Mary Stewart. The club also served the purpose of getting "women out of the house" in the evening, and quite a few worked at jobs during the day. Club meetings usually included a program or presentation, planning for projects, and dessert. Rumor has it that this allowed women to smoke away from their homes, as mentioned over the years by Ernestine Freeland. The male spouses were enjoying nights away at the poker table.

Early on, there were 15 members and they brought their mending as they socialized. Over the years, the majority of members have been year-round residents and the club served as a social hub, planning and hosting coffees, potlucks, picnics, card parties and the like for the community.

The question is, how did the name evolve? Anna Brown, one of the charter members, felt that 21 was the limit to the number of women who could fit into anyone's living room (although many years the roster held more than 21 names). The club adopted Hall 21 at the Traverse City State Hospital as a recipient of their fund raising endeavors, and held many holiday parties over the years for the residents. As the State Hospital closed, those activities centered on the Long Term Care facility in Northport, and now the club plans holiday treats for Tendercare in Suttons Bay.

As the years went by, the focus of fund raising expanded to many other charities and community causes annually, including the Red Cross, Heart Association, Goodwill, Salvation Army, Family Independence Agency, Big Brothers- Big Sisters, Women's Resource Center, Leelanau Conservancy, Omena Historical Society, The Northport Promise, Omena Woods Association, Leelanau Christian Neighbors, and Leelanau County Senior Services. The club fundraised for and managed the

Omena Improvement Fund which took on many projects large and small. Thousands of dollars were raised to build the Omena Community Room adjacent to the Fire Hall and to purchase the furnishings and carpeting. The Club optioned the Omena Beach property for purchase in the 1970's and contributed greatly toward its purchase by the Township. The Club also cleaned and raked the beach each year, planted bulbs and shrubs, and maintained a swimming raft. An annual scholarship to NMC was established. There is a Geneva Putnam Smith (former postmistress who lived in what is now the Lingaur home next to the Tamarack Gallery) scholarship given annually in the amount of \$500 to a Northport High School graduate. In 1962 the Club joined with OWC in refurbishing and taking care of the memorial plot next to the Fire Hall.

Activities to raise funds include a spring white elephant sale and an annual summer bake sale.

In December, the club organizes the Omena Community Christmas party to celebrate the arrival of Santa at the fire station and it provides all the homemade cookies and candy for the children and attendees.

The club meets on the first Wednesday evening of the month at the Community Room in downtown Omena.



Postmaster Geneva Smith





Bea Kimmerly



Left: Sally Viskochil, Geneva Smith, Bea Kimmerly

*All photos courtesy of Sheila Lingauer,  
grand daughter of Geneva Smith*

Bea Kimmerly at age 103 is the oldest living member and she has been treasurer since 1972. Other officers are Maureen Nelson, president; Margie Meachem, vice-president; and Marsha Buehler, secretary. The club currently has between 12-18 members, and welcomes new members and guests. While most members live in and around Omena, a few have moved elsewhere in the area and still participate in club activities.

## OPVA

**by Marcia Biskupski**

**THE OMENA VILLAGE PRESERVATION ASSOCIATION** was formed in 2002 when five residents came together when historic properties -- the Post Office, the Anderson House and the property the OHS museum resides on -- were in danger of being demolished or remodeled for commercial purposes. These residents contributed funds for the purchase of those properties.

In 2004, OVPA donated land on its property for the new site of the historic Putnam Cloud Tower House when it was moved from its original location at Villa Marquette. The house was in danger of being demolished due to its lack of maintenance and use. The site had previously held a pole building that was not in keeping with the association's purpose to preserve the historical character of downtown Omena.

Over the years, much time and effort have been expended to keep the properties in good shape. The Anderson House has seen a wonderful restoration with new windows, landscaping, (including at the bay front), well, and interior upgrades. The Post Office has also

been upgraded with new flooring, cabinetry, lighting, and painting. It is a community focal point for meeting fellow residents.

Members continually focus on properties within the downtown Omena boundaries for potential acquisition in order to maintain our historic heritage. OVPA now has 86 dedicated members and growing because residents are feeling the importance and impact of a forward moving preservation organization.

OVPA acquired 501 c (3) IRS tax status so that continuing contributions are tax deductible. It is partnering with the OHS in an effort to obtain historic district status for Omena, a designation that will highlight how important a historic area this is.

"It takes a community working together to be successful, sustain and thrive."

-Austin Jones, founder Omena Village Preservation Association



# OMENA WOODS ASSOCIATION

by Dale Blount

**IN 1976**, a small group of concerned property owners on Omena Point Road formed the Omena Woods Association (OWA) to preserve the natural beauty of the peninsula and to protect it from threatened development.

In 1983, President Trudy Lewis wrote, "The far-fetched dream of a handful of people...is now a reality! We own the woods! The many long hours spent in meetings and discussions have paid off." At the annual meeting, the land contract was burned!

Today, OWA has nearly 140 members and approximately 110 acres of woodlands. In 2004, the Association joined with the Leelanau Conservancy in establishing a Conservation Easement to permanently protect the property from any development. This

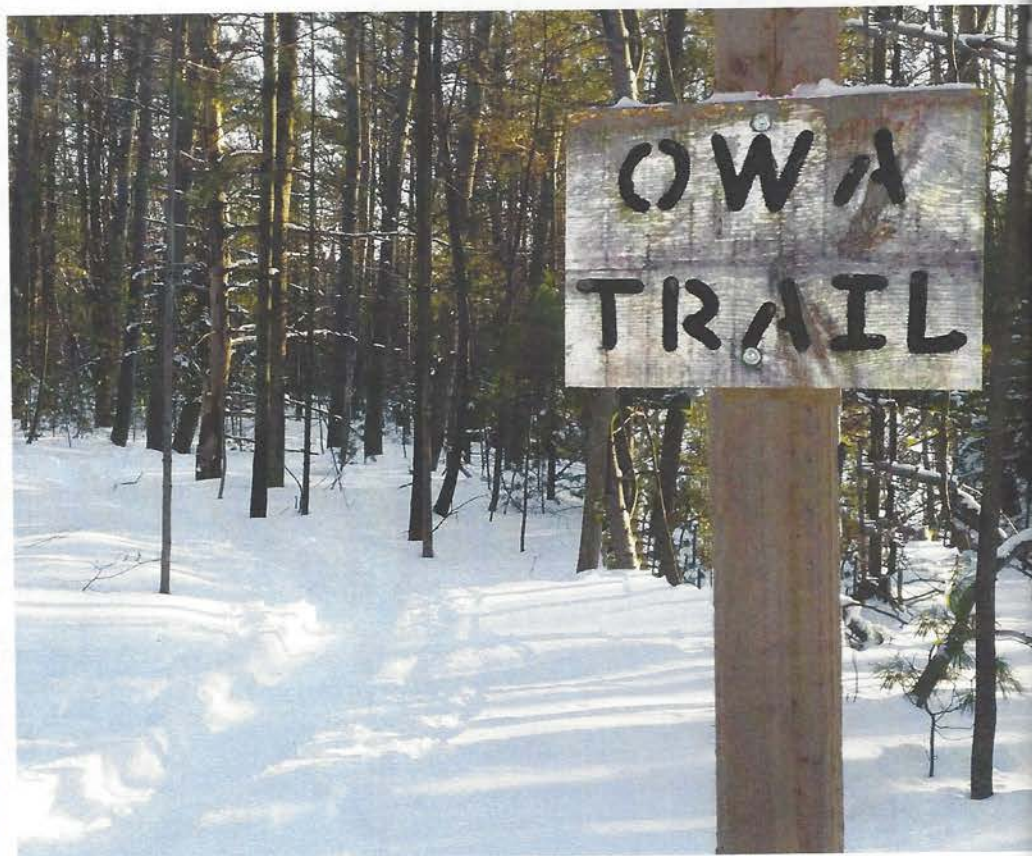
agreement permits members of the Association and Friends of the Woods (a non-voting membership category) to use the woods for recreational purposes. The OWA property is not open to the public or for use by anyone except Members, Friends, and their guests.

At the annual meeting held in July, members receive updates on activities relative to improvements (e.g., trail management), conservation measures, environmental threats to the woods, and political efforts focused on sustaining the woods. OWA has a website at [www.omenawoods.com](http://www.omenawoods.com) where members and interested parties can access information about the Association.

Anyone wishing to join OWA must meet certain property requirements. Those interested should contact our current membership chair, Mary Helen Ray.



Beautiful Trail in Winter



Omena Woods Trail  
Photos by Jim Miller





# OMENA WINE & LITERARY SOCIETY

by Mary Smart

**IN THE FALL OF 2011**, several women in Omena wanted to start a book club that would be a small, informal monthly gathering in members' homes. It was decided that eight to twelve people would be ideal so that everyone would have a chance to host and also lead a discussion over the course of a season. The OWLS meet monthly, September to June. Members suggested we meet later in the day with a glass of wine. The Omena Wine and Literary Society adopted an owl logo designed by Judy Balas and had it inscribed on a set of wineglasses that are in use at every meeting.

The group quickly evolved under the leadership of Nana Kennedy and books were selected based upon members' suggestions. A range of current novels to classics comprised the list. Members were pleasantly surprised at what they read, often venturing out of their comfort zones to read such diverse titles as Thomas More's *Utopia*, Gabriel Garcia Marquez' *Love in the Time of Cholera*, Diana Keaton's autobiography, and Elizabeth Strout's *Olive Kitteridge*.

The OWLS have enjoyed participating in the annual St. Patrick's Day parade in Omena and the summer historical parades. Participating members mount the float wearing glasses that give everyone a decidedly owl-like look. One of the two activities of special interest is the monthly poem selected by Nana Kennedy that is read and discussed. In June, before the OWLS nest during July and August, a literary picnic is held at current group leader Mary Smart's under the catalpa tree. Members bring favorite poems to read aloud and the favorable June weather has cooperated for an old-fashioned way to start the summer.



Book Club meeting at the home of Judy Balas. First row: Kanda McKee, Jacquie Johnson, Cari Noga (guest author), Nana Kennedy, Annette Deibel. Second row: Mary Smart, Joey Bensley, Be Fuertges, Judy Balas, Judy Smart, Joan Blount, (Debbie Disch taking the picture)

OHS thanks Joan Brovins and Tom Oehmke  
for their special donation in honor of  
George and Annette Husted.



# Authors' Stories

by Joan Blount and Kathy Miller

**IN THE LAST ISSUE** of *Timelines*, we focused on authors from Omena's past. This edition will highlight the authors of Omena's present who continue to have a tie to our small village. Who would think little old Omena would offer up such a diversity of subject matter from so many writers from such colorful and interesting backgrounds? Because there are so many from our little hamlet, we will present the second group in this issue and conclude with the remaining authors in our next issue of *Timelines*. Please take a look at our library this summer. It is located upstairs in our museum. This room has a couple of comfortable chairs, wonderful lighting, a spectacular view of our bay and displays many authors' photos along with a copy of at least one of their books.



## TIM ALLEN

*Don't Stand Too Close to a Naked Man*, 1994.

*I'm Not Really Here*, 1996.

Actor, comedian Tim Allen Dick was born in Denver, Colorado to Gerald and Martha Dick, one of six children. He discovered his skill at comedy early on. As his last name became fodder for childhood teasing, he often used his wit to deflect insults. Allen had a strong connection with his father, who instilled a love for all things automotive. His father was killed by a drunken driver when Tim was 11 years old. In the wake of that tragedy, his mother moved the family to Detroit.

Allen was an indifferent student but had a passion for shop class. After receiving his high school diploma, he attended Central Michigan University. He later transferred to Western Michigan University to earn a Bachelor's degree in television and radio production.

In 1981, Allen returned to Detroit. Working at an ad agency by day, he became a regular at the Comedy Castle in the evenings. By 1990, Allen's "Men Are Pigs" routine, which focused on the male love of hardware, was made into a Showtime television special. It caught the attention of Disney studios, who offered Allen leading roles in small-screen adaptations of "Turner & Hooch" and "The Dead Poets Society", but he turned them down and fought for his own material. He eventually persuaded the studio to use his routine as the basis for a new sitcom called *Home Improvement*.

1994 was an important year for Allen. In the same week, he had the number one book, *Don't Stand Too Close to a Naked Man*, the number one television show, *Home Improvement*, and a number one box office hit, *The Santa Clause*. In 1996 he was awarded the Golden Globe for his work on *Home Improvement* and earned even more commercial success with the book, *I'm Not Really Here*.

Allen continues to run his production house, Boxing Cat Films, and his design studio, Tim Allen Designs. He previously summered in Omena and now has a summer home in Leland.





## JAMES L. CENTNER

*Code Name: Magpie: The Final Nazi Espionage Mission Against the U.S. in WWII, 2006.*

Jim Centner spent thirty years in the Army, retiring as Colonel, twenty five years as adjunct professor of management at his alma mater, Xavier University, and over fifty years as an executive in the armored limousine industry. Notably, he commanded a Counter Intelligence Detachment in Japan during the occupation, became the "clearing house" for information on presidential limousines, and traveled to over 100 countries serving Heads of State on 5 continents. He authored a textbook of Management-Labor Case Studies and published articles for professional journals and labor law fields.

Now retired, he lives with his wife at Northport Point during the summer months and Cincinnati the rest of the year.

Jim's ancestors, Frank and Julia Cloud, of Cincinnati, purchased the Rinaldo Putnam house and property in 1893. Most of that property was given to the Jesuits and became Villa Marquette, but the Cloud family kept the cottage on M-22, and that eventually became the Centner family cottage. In 2004, the Villa donated the house to OHS and they moved it to downtown Omena where it is now the Putnam Cloud Tower House, and home to the OHS. Jim and his wife and three children, Jim, Marsha, and Amy, spent their summers in Omena in the Centner family cottage. Jim's daughter, Marsha Buehler, is a year-round Omena resident.

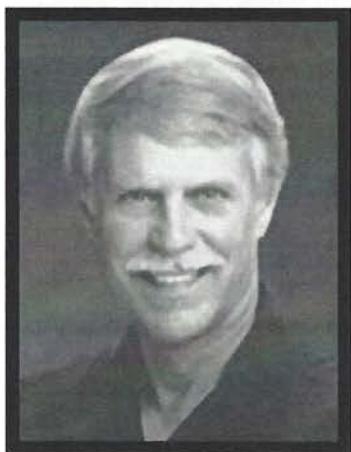


## KAY CHARTER

*For the Love of Birds, 2000.*

Preserving and restoring desperately needed bird habitat has been Kay and Jim Charter's personal crusade for years. By the fall of 1972, the Charters had become acutely aware that the birds they loved to watch were in decline. They sold their bay front home and bought 47 acres of mixed habitat. They established a safe haven for warblers, orioles, buntings and other feathered jewels at the place they call "Charter Sanctuary". At this small avian paradise near Omena, Michigan, the Charters began to use their land as an outdoor classroom where others can learn how to help our troubled bird population.

The sanctuary grew into "Saving Birds Thru Habitat", which expanded their educational facilities.



## ALAN CRAKER

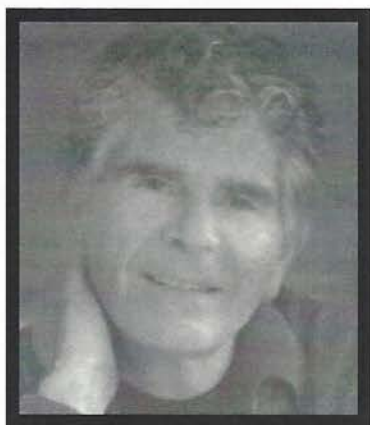
*Justifiable, 2009.*

Craker was an Air Force Security Policeman during the Vietnam War, has a BA in Education and taught 4th, 5th and 6th graders for the Traverse City Schools from 1977 to 2001. He was also a Private Investigator for a local attorney.

Alan's great-great grandfather, George Craker, was one of the first seven white men to settle in Leelanau County. Alan still lives in the area, drives a truck for Northern Lumber, and is active in the Omena Presbyterian Church, which his great-great grandfather helped to found.

His book, *Justifiable*, is a book for middle-school readers about a murder in an ice fishing shanty near Glen Arbor, MI





## ORAN B. HESTERMAN

*Fair Food: Growing a Healthy, Sustainable Food System for All, 2011.*

Oran Hesterman is the president and CEO of Fair Food Network, a non-profit organization based in Ann Arbor, Michigan. He is a national leader in sustainable agriculture and food systems, and the author of *Fair Food*, as well as more than 400 reports and articles on subjects such as cover crops, crop rotation, and the impact of philanthropic investments on food systems practice and policy.

Beyond listing the health, environmental and economic dysfunctions of the current broken American food system, his book presents success stories and illuminates a clear path toward a more sustainable and equitable food future.

Before starting the Fair Food Network, Dr. Hesterman co-led the Integrated Farming System and Food and Society Programs for the W.K. Kellogg Foundation for 15 years. Prior to his position at the Kellogg Foundation, he was a fellow at the National Center for Food and Agriculture Policy in Washington, D.C. and a professor of crop and soil science at Michigan State University in East Lansing from 1984-1995.

Dr. Hesterman earned his bachelor's and master's degrees from UCLA-Davis and received his doctorate in agronomy and business administration from the University of Minnesota, St. Paul.

He grew up in Berkley, California and presently divides his time between Ann Arbor and Omena with his wife, Lucinda Kurtz.



## AMANDA HOLMES

*Omena A Place in Time, 2002*

Amanda has a Ph.D. in Folklore and Folklife and a Certificate in Historic Preservation, both from the University of Pennsylvania. She has written numerous architectural, landscape, and engineering studies for the National Park Service. Amanda's award-winning history, *Omena A Place in Time*, is in many of our homes and placed proudly on our coffee tables. Amanda trained at the Salt Institute for Documentary Studies in Portland, Maine and, in addition to teaching writing at the university level, she has presented living history programs about 19th century farm life. She received her undergraduate degree in American Studies from Amherst

College. Currently, she is the executive director for Fishtown Preservation in Leland. Amanda and her husband, Dan, live in Omena and have an ongoing project with the restoration of the family's farm.



## CLEVE JONES

*Stitching a Revolution: The Making of an Activist, 2000.*

Cleve Jones, son of the late Omena summer residents Austin and Marion Jones, has deep roots in the Grand Rapids and Traverse City area. He is the founder of the NAMES Project AIDS Memorial Quilt which has become, at 54 tons, the world's largest piece of community folk art as of 2009. In 1983, at the onset of the AIDS pandemic, Jones co-founded the San Francisco AIDS Foundation which has grown into one of the largest and most influential People with AIDS advocacy organizations in the United States.

In his book, he reveals his experience as an early victim of AIDS. Cleve dislikes being called a visionary, but what other word would suit a man who worked with San Francisco Supervisor, Harvey Milk, led the famed White Night riots after Milk's assassination, and then introduced mainstream America to an epidemic by creating the AIDS MEMORIAL QUILT. He lives in Palm Springs, California.





## THE OWNERS OF SUNSET LODGE:

### *Past & Present*

by Larry Bensley



#### PREVIOUS OWNERS

**LINDA AND DAVID JACOBS**, the previous owners of Sunset Lodge, graciously agreed to answer some questions regarding their years at the Lodge and what was involved in making it a first class bed and breakfast. They were out of town for an extended period but I was able to communicate with them via e-mail and gather some interesting information about their experiences and memorable moments in renovating the buildings.

Linda, who was living in Whitehall, moved north in 1980 after accepting employment as a speech therapist with Traverse Bay Intermediate School District. Eventually, she was given the Leelanau County territory that included Glen Lake, Northport and Suttons Bay Schools. In addition, she taught skiing and was a member of the ski patrol at Sugar Loaf three to five nights a week. Linda and Dave were married in the early 1990s. The first five years of their marriage, Dave worked in Muskegon and commuted to their home in Suttons Bay where, for four years, they owned the Cottage Bed and Breakfast. In the fall of 1995, they purchased Sunset Lodge and by January 1996, were hard at work. Dave would arrive home with the week's supply of drywall,

glass for 21 broken windows, and materials to add four new bathrooms. With everything patched and painted, they somehow managed to open by mid June 1996.

According to Dave and Linda, a memorable experience occurred just two days before they had to serve their first guest's breakfast. Not only did they not have a kitchen, but they also had to locate the china, linen and silver that had been stored for three months. To make matters worse, a leaf had to be made for the table, as it was too small. Remarkably, it all came together with pictures being hung as guests drove up.

One of the most memorable moments occurred the first winter when they took out the chimney in order to make room for the new plumbing runs. Since it was taken out from the inside, of course the roof needed to be patched outside. Dave was tied off from a large tree and patched the roof before coming down the very steep roof three stories up with a set of ladders that were barely long enough to reach the ground. Fortunately, all turned out okay and Dave survived.

Another memorable moment that was less than wonderful, included a skunk that "went off" next to an



open window in the Garden Suite at about three in the morning. There was not much to be done except apologize profusely and offer a refund. Adding to those less than wonderful moments were the two 55 gallon drums of raccoon droppings that had to be removed from an outbuilding. Linda summed it all up by saying, "We were dusty, dirty and spattered a lot in those days."



Dave and Linda were able to restore Sunset Lodge on a limited budget by taking on one major project at a time and by doing the work themselves. It was a multi year process but got easier each year. Every idea was worth discussing and there was collaboration on all the decisions. They both enjoyed cooking and the operation was structured so one person could manage the work, allowing for the other to escape and enjoy a much needed respite occasionally.

With all the major work and deadlines looming, Linda and Dave are thankful for the many friends and family

who lent a hand. Their hope was that guests would enjoy the relaxing property they had fallen in love with. Many of their guests became like family and the Jacobs wanted them to experience the best Leelanau County has to offer in scenery, restaurants, villages and wineries.

In answer to my question about notable celebrities, Linda indicated she hoped they treated all their guests as celebrities. They did have the mayor of Los Angeles and his family, but only realized his celebrity status after the security detail arrived to make sure the Lodge was secure. Linda did mention they had several hosts from HGTV/Discovery Channels and a noted comedian/actor from Saturday Night Live. However, one of the most enjoyable guests was a principal player from the Detroit Symphony who sat on the hill overlooking the bay, practicing for several hours a day.

As far as advice to new owners, the Jacobs said the following: "Be flexible, as things may not (probably won't) go as you plan. Don't go to bed without prepping for the morning. Keep your sense of humor near the surface; it's much easier to laugh than to cry. Keep extra toilet parts on hand (they seem to only break at night) and know how to use them. And keep a stock of paintbrushes in the barn".

Linda and Dave's final words were: "Thanks to the many folks in the community who welcomed us with open arms. We felt honored to have been given the opportunity to save Sunset Lodge and to live in this beautiful place. So many times neighbors would stop by and share a story or leave a zucchini. While we now have a Northport address, our hearts will always be in Omena. Look for us enjoying the bay, on our bikes, or volunteering our time in the community."

## PRESENT OWNERS



**MOVING NOW TO THE PRESENT,** the Omena Historical Society welcomes the new owners of Sunset Lodge, Dan and Mary Ziegeler. It is exciting that they are committed to preserving the only remaining resort in Omena, which opened in

1898. In order to discover more about Dan and Mary, we decided to interview them for the *Timelines*. My wife, Joey, and I spent a lovely morning with them in the newly redecorated living room of the Lodge. Following is some of the information we derived from our visit.

Dan and Mary moved to Omena from Ann Arbor

where they first met while working for a bank in Detroit. Dan eventually embarked on a 30-year career as a management consultant, and Mary became a busy mother raising three children (Claire, 25; Dan, 23; Charlie, 21), as well as volunteering for several charitable organizations. Mary began part-time work for a local health club as a front desk manager, concierge, and business office assistant. In addition, she also worked for the University of Michigan Athletic Department in guest services. Both jobs provided a great deal of experience in dealing with the public, as well as providing knowledge on setting up bookings, working with credit cards, etc., all skills important for running a bed and breakfast like Sunset Lodge.



When Dan contemplated an opportunity for early retirement, they were both interested in a lifestyle change. Mary suggested the idea of buying Sunset Lodge, which had been put up for sale. Although Dan had never seen Sunset Lodge, Mary had been a guest on several occasions. In addition, her parents had lived in Suttons Bay for twenty years, so she and Dan were very familiar with the area and shared a deep affection for Leelanau County. In the summer of 2014, Mary and their daughter, Claire, persuaded Dan to come up and stay a few nights at Sunset Lodge which led them all to the notion of buying the property. When talking with owners Dave and Linda Jacobs about the property and the business, they became sold on the idea of acquiring Sunset Lodge and continuing to offer it as a bed and breakfast. After speaking with a realtor and understanding the pros and cons of buying the business, they were further convinced that Omena would be an ideal location for what they had in mind.



Being avid outdoor enthusiasts, they have decided to gradually focus their marketing to emphasize pursuits such as cycling, hiking, snowshoeing, etc. Of course, they continue to welcome the large contingent of regular guests who return to Sunset Lodge every summer, as well as people who simply want to enjoy Omena and the sunsets, and those attending a wedding or other events in the area. They are also promoting the site to host weddings, family gatherings, business retreats, and gatherings of special groups such as birders, book clubs, yoga and cycling clubs, and other. Marketing efforts for the Lodge will emphasize the natural features of Leelanau: local vineyards, fall color tours, the orchards in spring when in full bloom, the many farm markets in the area, and the cultural and historical activities and festival events that take place year around. In addition, at some point, they may offer projects where people can stay and learn something like building chicken coops, preserving foods, bee keeping, etc. For example, the Leelanau BirdFest will staged its May 30th "Optics Day" event in the Sunset Lodge Social Hall. Dan and Mary hope Sunset Lodge can be used by area organizations

and nonprofits for similar activities.

As far as the buildings are concerned, the plan is to keep them as they are and continue the meticulous upkeep Dave and Linda Jacobs provided during their ownership of the Lodge. There are five buildings: three have guest rooms, a total of 12 rooms, plus the Social Hall and the barn with Mary Jo Wheeler's iconic painting restored by Linda Jacobs. The main "Wheeler House" will be decorated in a more casual look that is still in keeping with the age and architecture of the house.

The business of running the B&B will be maintained with a few additions. Both Dan and Mary are grateful for the help and advice they have received from Dave and Linda, which included a lovely handwritten journal of many recipes, along with tips and practical B&B advice. In addition, they are retaining the Lodge's two employees, Paul Christopherson and Eric Potes, with whom they are very impressed. The biggest change to operations is the prospect of being open during all four seasons, and one of their biggest challenges will be developing business for winter guests.

Finally, the Ziegelers wanted to express their fascination with the history of Sunset Lodge and Omena and their appreciation for the work of the Omena Historical Society in preserving and telling the story of the area. They also want people to know they appreciate the warm welcome they have received from the wonderful people of this very special community.

Joey and I appreciated Dan and Mary's wonderful hospitality and we were pleased to see what has been done with the first floor of the main house and experience the Ziegelers' excitement as they venture into their new life in Omena.

For information about Sunset Lodge, one can visit the website at [www.sunsetlodgeomena.com](http://www.sunsetlodgeomena.com) or stop by and talk with Dan and Mary.







# The Orchard on Omena Heights- *Still Bearing Fruit*

A Chicago Festival-Smith Apple Wagon

by Debby Disch

**APPLE TREES** were already growing on the land on top of what we now know as Omena Heights when Peter Dougherty arrived in 1852. It is most likely the site of the oldest cultivated fruit trees in Leelanau Township, if not Leelanau County. The top of Omena Point was home to the annual summer encampment of the Shabwasung Band of the Ottawa and Chippewa Indians. By 1853, Chief Shabwasung and his band had moved to Northport to be nearer to Reverend George N. Smith's mission.

An 1851 surveyor's geological survey map of what is now Leelanau Township, labeled Omena Point as "Shawasson Point", the surveyor's phonetic spelling of Shabwasung. The area we now call Omena Heights was labeled "Old Dune". The map also noted an Indian Village at the base of the point, and identified "a garden, an apple orchard, a thicket, and a clearing."

When Dougherty came to "New Mission", as Omena was called at the time, from Old Mission, it was with the Agosa Band, also Ottawa-Chippewa Indians. Chief Agosa's band of about 40 families was one of the largest in the area. The Presbyterian Board of Foreign Missions had purchased 333 acres--most of Omena Point. Interestingly, the surveyor of the 1851 map, Abraham S. Wadsworth, had purchased the bottom tip of Section 36, the tip of Omena Point.

Farming was a primary activity at the mission, both for survival of the community and as part of the education

of the Indian children and adults. Dougherty hoped that it would provide them with a means of livelihood. The farm and orchards flourished under Dougherty and the mission's farmer, George A. Craker. However, the Civil War took a financial toll on the whole country. By 1867, the Presbytery could no longer fund the boarding school. The next year, Dougherty sold the mission and farm to Valentine Miller, leading to its eventual development as a resort. The mission and farm changed hands at least five times in fifteen years, and they did not stay together during that time. Among the owners of the farm during that period were William and Martha Gill, who were the great-great-great grandparents of Eugenie Scott von Holt.

By 1910, the farm was owned by partners Hawley and Snyder, from Hart, Michigan. Hawley was a nurseryman and Snyder was a banker. The beautifully maintained orchard that Dougherty and Craker had overseen was, by then, overgrown, and had to be pruned. Clair Wolfe, who worked for them, reported that it was so overgrown, the horse teams couldn't get through.

In 1911, a magazine article about the Grand Traverse region had this to say: "...years ago the Omena Point plateau was taken possession of by an enterprising fruit grower who set an apple orchard covering 70 odd acres. Today this is one of the finest apple producing propositions of the region." At the time, it was the largest apple orchard in the township. The largest block of Golden Russet apple trees in the world was planted

Photo Caption:



here. Other varieties included Northern Spy, Baldwin, Wagner, Rhode Island Greening, Snow Apple and Twenty Ounce Pippin.

Mr. and Mrs. Grant Goodrich moved from Hart with their nine-year old daughter, Juanita, who later married Charles Kalchik, to oversee the orchard. The owners wanted to sell the orchard and Snyder offered Goodrich a percentage of the money if he found a buyer. Three years later, in 1921, he did. The buyer was Thomas S. Smith of Chicago, Illinois. He owned a number of orchards in Illinois and along the west coast of Michigan, and sold his apples in Chicago's South Water Street Market. He was also a supplier of apples to the Chicago area A&P stores. Smith hired Charles Lawson, who worked on one of Smith's orchards in Roodhouse, Illinois, to come to Omena and manage the orchard. The Lawsons lived in the first house on top of the hill.

In the early years, work in the orchards was done by horse teams. They also hauled the barrels of apples to the dock in Omena to be shipped to Chicago. The apples were packed in barrels that were made in the cooper shed right in the orchard. Many local people were hired to pick apples and to pack them for shipping. The largest outbuilding on the farm is still called the 'packing house'. After the arrival of train service through Omena, apples

were shipped to Chicago via train.

By the early 1930s, some of the blocks of apple trees were removed. What remained of the old 'Indian orchard' was pulled out in 1938-9. By 1951, Thomas S. Smith's son, George, had replaced many of the apple trees with tart cherries, and tart cherries became the orchard's main crop over the following decades.

George Smith and his wife, Helen, took over from his father and ran the orchards and fruit business. As times changed, they slowly divested the other orchards and the Omena became the entire business. They continued with some apples, increased the number of tart cherry trees, and experimented for a while in the late 1950s and early 60s with apricot trees that they sold to Gerber for use in baby food.

Harvesting cherries was a labor-intensive job and had to be done in a short period of time. As a result, all of the orchards in the area employed migrant or seasonal workers to hand-pick the cherries. The Smith orchards employed over 100 pickers every summer. Almost everyone in the family from a fairly young age was in the orchards picking, but, with small children in the families, as well, over 150 people lived on the Smith orchards for a period of several weeks each summer. The



Community members pick apples at one of Thomas S. Smith and Sons' Michigan Orchards.





Top left: Planting the First Tree of the 1977 Replant, Les Disch, Tom Smith, Preston Smith, (?), (?), Mary Smith

Bottom left: Tractor with Young Cherry Trees

Right: Mary Smith's Research Kitchen in the Packing House

barn, which was no longer used for farm animals, and the packing house, no longer used for packing apples, were divided into living spaces with temporary dividers made of apple crates. The farm owned a number of large Army surplus tents, as well, that were used for housing. For most of the years, the people who came to the Smith orchards, lived in Alabama and spent their summers picking different fruits as they ripened on the way up and back home. After cherries in Omena, for example, they started back downstate, where they picked peaches and pickling cucumbers on several downstate farms. For the most part, the same families came year after year.

Helen Smith died in 1967, several years after George, and their sons took over the business, with Tom and his wife, Mary, as general managers. For a few years, the orchard management was contracted out to Chuck Kalchik. After finishing college, Rink Smith took over management of the orchard, and Bob Mosher was hired as a full time employee. Also in 1967, under Chuck Kalchik's management, the orchard took advantage of the advances in harvesting technology and began harvesting cherries using mechanical shakers.

In the late 1970s and early 1980s, Tom and Mary needed to replant all of the cherry trees. They decided

to experiment with a relatively new approach and planted their 12,000 at a density triple that of most orchards, in order to more efficiently use the land and increase productivity per acre. Some of those blocks, while near the end of their productive life, still stand and are productive today.

Tom and Mary also put a great deal of effort into trying to increase the market for tart cherries. Using her degrees in chemistry and her work experience with the Drackett Co. and Proctor and Gamble, Mary developed three new cherry products that were patented. Cherry flavor enhancer was patented in 1988. A patent was issued in 1993 for cherry juice produced by a freeze method instead of heat method, and a nutraceutical cherry juice patent was issued in 2007 to Mary.

In 1997, based on their contributions to the cherry industry, Tom and Mary were recognized with the Cherry Promotion Award and rode in that year's Cherry Festival parade.

Tom died in 2001 and Mary in 2009, but the orchard remains in the family and continues to be an important part of the region's agricultural heritage.





# Milestones 2014-2015

## **Dorothy “Dottie” Benjamin Holmes** **March 27, 1925 – May 14, 2014**

Dorothy Benjamin Holmes was the daughter of Stanley L. and Lillian (Couch) Benjamin. Dorothy attended Michigan State University, where she earned a Bachelor's Degree in Home Economics and became a life-long Spartan supporter. While at MSU, Dorothy met Herbert, whom she married as soon as he returned from his WWII U.S. Army service overseas. She and Herb lived in Lake City and Cadillac. She was dedicated to designing and making quilts, rugs and other art, much of which will long survive her. In 1983 the Holmes found an old farmstead in Omena on Overlook Road, the perfect place to retire. Dorothy is survived by seven children: Lucinda (Peter) Komblevitz of Lowell; Cassandra (Larry) Proctor of St. John's; Mark Holmes of Round Lake, Illinois; Justin (Judith) Holmes of Gazelle, California; Molly (Mark) Cybowski of Charlotte, North Carolina; Heidi (David) Tagg of Coppersville, and Amanda (Daniel Stewart) Holmes of Omena; thirteen grandchildren; one great-grandchild; and two sisters, Norma (Richard) Cade and Helen (Ken) Knudtson; and the many nieces and nephews and young friends who called the Holmes household home for summer after summer. Dorothy was preceded in death by her husband Herbert E. Holmes; daughter Jennifer (Steve) Oppeneer; her parents; and three brothers, Robert, Edward, and William Benjamin.

## **Janet Graf Tate** **December 9, 1923 – July 27, 2014**

Janet spent summers in Omena all of her life. She was born in Cincinnati to William and Christine Graf and moved to Memphis after she married S. Shepherd Tate in 1948. Janet was an active member of the Omena summer community throughout her life. As a teenager she worked at the Cherry Basket Farm packing cherries to be shipped. In more recent years, she was a member of Cherry Basket Neighbors. Many of her memories of Omena are included in *Omena – A Place in Time*. She is survived by her husband of 66 years, Shep; three children, Adele Tate, Shep (Sandy) Tate, and Janet Tate (George) Walker; and five grandchildren.

## **Austin Jones** **1929 – August 2014**

Austin Jones was born in Reading, Pennsylvania in 1929 and was the son of Blythe (Casey) Jones and Helen Rupert Jones. He was the husband of Marion Kirk Jones who passed away earlier in 2014. Austin was raised in Birmingham, Michigan. He received his BA from University of Illinois, his Masters from Purdue and his PhD in Clinical Psychology from University of Rochester. He and his wife eventually moved to Phoenix where they both had long teaching careers at Arizona State University. Austin had many interests. As a young man he wrote and directed three dance dramas which Marion, his then-to-be wife choreographed. They were performed at Cranbrook School's Greek Theatre in Bloomfield, Michigan. He was also an accomplished pianist, loved art, music and gardening, enjoyed sailing and had a lifetime interest in politics and environmental issues. He and Marion had a summer home in Omena, Michigan where he became very active in environmental issues. He was one of the founders of the Omena Woods Association, an environmental preservation organization. Austin is survived by his two children, Cleve Jones, Elizabeth (John) Ettinger; two granddaughters, Sylvia and Frankie Ettinger; two sisters, Sylvia Hatton and Suzanne Mulligan; four nephews, a niece and many cousins.

## **Glenn Lee Brown** **October 8, 1936 – September 20, 2014**

Glenn was born and raised in Omena. His parents, Chatham and Anna Brown were living in a house next to the Bass Lake Schoolhouse where Glenn and his twin sister Glenna were born. Glenn attended Northport School and worked at Deering's Market in Northport when he was a young man, along with his lifelong friend, Myrn Steele. Glenn was a longtime fruit grower and enjoyed many years of running his fruit stand and selling "Great Cherry Pies" and firewood. He is survived by his sisters Maone (Myrn) Steele, Glenna Penney, Arden Orrell, Marcia Scrivano; his brother Greg Brown, and partner Mia Powers; his ex-wife Susie Brown; his sons Mark (Susan), Gary (Dotty), and Tony (Amanda); five grandchildren; and 8 great-grandchildren.



### **John “Jack” F. Sarvis**

**June 11, 1919 – September 29, 2014**

Jack graduated from Princeton University in 1942. In the same year, he enlisted in the U.S. Army Air Corps and was stationed in Norwich, England. In 1943, he married Mary Louise Bonbright, of Flint. Upon his return to civilian life and Flint in 1945, Jack was employed at the Genesee Bank and Trust Company where he became the Senior Vice President and Cashier. Jack served on the boards of several Flint organizations. He retired in 1983, and in 1989 he and Mary Louise moved to Omena. Jack was predeceased by his parents, a brother, and a sister. He is survived by his wife, Mary Louise; his three daughters, Katherine (Brett) Smith, Elizabeth Harris, and Jean (Bruce) Bertelsen; six grandchildren and eight great-grandchildren.

### **Jon J. Bourdo**

**April 14, 1941 – October 30, 2014**

Jon was born in Leelanau County to Oscar G. and Voda Bourdo. He graduated from Kendall School of Design in Grand Rapids where he met his wife, Pat (Hansen) Bourdo, who survives. He worked as a graphic designer, had Bourdo Display Service in Traverse City and then was with Milliken Department Stores. He and his wife Pat established Woodland Herb Farm in 1977, the first herb farm in northern Michigan. They also established Twisted Whiskers in Omena. Jon was well known for his “wet into wet” watercolor technique, wind vanes, and copper sculptures. He was an avid sailor. Jon had an interest in paleontology and served many years on the board of directors of Northwestern Michigan Paleontology Museum. Jon is survived by his wife; his sister Carolyn Pickering; a brother Skip Bourdo; a sister-in-law Jean Royster; and several nieces and nephews.

### **Robert K. Craker**

**December 22, 1947 – November 10, 2014**

Robert was the son of Robert Lee Craker and Pauline J. (Kehl) Craker. He grew up in Northport and had lived in Omena for about 30 years. His ancestor, George Craker, arrived in Omena in 1852 with the Rev. Peter Dougherty. Rob was well known for his work in fine art. He was also a wonderful cook for friends and family. He is survived by his sisters, Jeanne E. (Fred) Harter and Julie A. Story. He is preceded in death by his mother, Pauline, his sister, Cynthia Frank, and his father, Robert.

### **Daniel J. Schleef**

**September 29, 1927 – November 26, 2014**

Dan was born in Nebraska to the Rev. Alfred Schleef and Meta Schleef. Dan served in the United States army occupation forces in Europe during 1946 to 1948. He was a Professor at the College of Engineering at the University of Cincinnati. Dan married Elizabeth Morgan in 1956. The couple and their two daughters began spending summers at Omena in 1965. In 1976 Dan and a group of friends founded the Omena Woods Association dedicated to the preservation of undeveloped woodlands on Omena Point. He was a past Commodore of the Omena Traverse Yacht Club. Dan is survived by his wife; his daughters, Katy Schleef (John Hadder), and Joan Schleef; and his brother Rev. Roger (Elaine) Schleef. He was preceded in death by his sister Mary Schleef and his half-sister Florence Annabel.

### **Jeanne Wright Tateman Hines**

**August 19, 1914 -- December 7, 2014**

Jeanne grew up in Cincinnati and attended the University of Cincinnati. She married the late Harry K. Hines, M.D. on June 11, 1938. She is survived by her daughters, Nancy Starr, Carol Knoll, Susan Siemer and Amy (John W. II) Fischer; 10 grandchildren; and 12 great-grandchildren. Jeanne had a very active civic life in Cincinnati and when in about 1970 she and her husband purchased their cottage on Ingalls Bay, “Hinesight” she became active in Omena summer events. The entire family has spent time here in the summers.

### **Florian “Skeet” Applegate Durbrow**

**July 8, 1916 – January 14, 2015**

Florian “Skeet” and her husband, Pete, spent their summers in Omena in an Ingalls Bay farmhouse the two converted into the family summer cottage. She was a noted interior designer in Cincinnati for many years with Nancy Ross Interiors. Skeet was a member of the Junior League of Cincinnati, a board member of The Convalescent Hospital for Children and the founder of The Cincinnati Antiques Festival. She was predeceased by her husband of 58 years, Lamonte “Pete” Durbrow III, and her first husband, Thomas K. Foster who was killed in action in WWII. She is survived by her daughters, Elizabeth (Geoff) Parker, their two children, and Laurie (Tom) Hyndman, and their three children; her sister in-law, Mildred Didlake; and her nieces and nephew.



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**James Gregory****May 30, 1927--February 12, 2015**

Jim was born in Greece and came to this country when he was 18 months old. He grew up in the Detroit area and resided in Grosse Pointe for many years. Jim passed away in north central Florida, where he and his wife Nancy moved ten years ago. All three of his sons were with him- James Paul, John Michael, and David Dwight. Jim summered in Omena for many years, and he loved the area. Friends and neighbors remember Jim for his kindness and the special smile that he always seemed to have. There will be a private family service later this year. He was preceded in death by his first wife, Betty, who passed away in 1997 and his younger sister Sophia Levett.

**Avis L. Wolfe****March 5, 1926 - February 14, 2015**

Avis was born in Omena to Harry S. Doe and Charlotte (Fisher) Doe. In 1945 she married Pfc. Julius G. Nelson who died in 1957. In 1959 she married Clarence "Bud" Wolfe who preceded her in death in 2011. Avis was a lifelong Omena/Northport resident who graduated from Northport Public Schools in 1943. She had a love of local history and shared her knowledge willingly. She was active in the Omena Historical Society and Northport Area Heritage Association. She was historian for Trinity Church in Northport. Avis is survived by a stepdaughter, Janice C. Wolfe Trudeau, three grandchildren, six great-grandchildren, four nieces and five nephews and their children and grandchildren. She was preceded in death by her parents, husbands, a sister and three brothers in infancy, one adult brother, Charles Doe, three adult sisters; Mildred Teugh, Jane Hudson, and Lois Jones, and nephews Bill Jones and Jeff Lyon.

# ANNOUNCING THE 2015 SUMMER PROGRAM

and another opportunity to cultivate your creativity. We are offering something for everyone 16 years and over in a variety of classes and workshops beginning on July 6th. A full calendar will be sent to you electronically via "The Crier" and posted on the website at:

[www.omenahistoricalsociety.org](http://www.omenahistoricalsociety.org)

OHS members will receive a tuition discount. Classes will be offered in acrylic painting (four seasons), poetry writing, designing a beaded necklace, painting on silk, flower arranging, faerie houses, handcrafting cards, sweetgrass basketry, Mah Jongg for beginners, and more. To help make OHS classes successful and remain affordable, help spread the word! There is typically a minimum number of students needed for a class to run, so tell family and friends not to miss out on great opportunities for enrichment and just plain fun!

For more information,  
get in touch with:

**Doni Lystra**

(donilystra@gmail.com)

**Lynn Sutton**

(lsnfiberartist@gmail.com)





# Fishing on Omena Bay

by Jim Miller

**WITH PRISTINE WATER**, millions of board feet of hardwood timber, tillable fertile soil, an abundance of wildlife and fish of all shapes and sizes, it is easy to understand man's early attraction to our area. Add to that, a scenic and serene beauty next to none and you have the essence of Omena life itself. Like a huge magnet, it pulls people out of the urban areas into the idyllic countryside with its rolling hills and sand dune bluffs overlooking the azure blue waters of the Great Lakes.

Omena's once abundant natural resources sustained life both locally and around the world. In the 1920s and 30s, fishermen Bill Schramm and John Bauer were standard fixtures on Omena Bay, netting lake trout and whitefish for local resorts and even fine eateries as far away as Chicago and New York. The book *Omena – A Place in Time* by Amanda Holmes is a great resource for information on these two gentlemen and tells of their decades long fishing activities.

The Treaty of 1836 gave Native Americans fishing rights in many regions of the Great Lakes in exchange for land. Trap nets or "gill nets" is one of the more common methods employed by Native American fishermen. A gill net is strung across an area and secured to the bottom with weights. When fish attempt to escape, their gills get caught in the net, hence, the term "gill net". Red marker buoys (sometimes faded pink) are positioned on each end of the net to warn boaters of their presence and make locating them easier. Gill nets are controversial and not an ideal method, as they do not discriminate between types of fish, many are wasted. A newer method that allows saving of non-desirable fish is being pursued for implementation

south of the 45th Parallel.

Michigan gill nets are weighted to keep them below the surface and stretched out. When boating, skippers should always be vigilant of their surroundings and especially on the lookout for marker buoys that indicate the presence of gill nets. They are not always easy to spot and they are not always as deep as they should be.

Case in point: A few years back, a group of us decided to jump in our pontoon boat and head out on a leisurely afternoon cruise to Suttons Bay. Being the ever-vigilant sailor that I am, I noticed gill net buoys on my starboard and port sides (notice the adept use of sailing jargon). I estimated them to be about 300 feet apart. Rather than go all the way around them, I decided to split the uprights and go between. The net is supposed to be far enough below the surface that my shallow prop should have no problem clearing it, right? Wrong! It does not take a brain surgeon to realize that it is never a good sign when the marker buoys begin following your boat. It is amazing how much net and fish a small prop can hold. I carefully unwrapped the mess that looked much like a cross between a giant bird's nest and the floor in the barbershop after my haircut with fish added for color. I now go around the markers.

Of course, fishing goes hand in hand with boating, which most that know me willingly admit I am no expert.

When I think of local fishing, I think of two people. One is Bill Krusel. Bill is an all around sportsman and quite entertaining when it comes to fishing and conversation. He's fun to fish with because he is easily swayed into heading out on a moment's notice, especially when I offer



## » President's Letter

to bring a beer or two and the weather is good, or even marginal. A few waves and a little rain never hurt anyone.

Last summer, Bill and I spent time catching and releasing some very nice small-mouth bass. The water never really warmed up but that was okay; we were fishing and telling each other stories about the big ones that got away and some that didn't. Many non-fishermen and women don't understand the allure of fishing and all that goes with it. I won't try to explain it here. Suffice to say, for those that enjoy it, no explanation is necessary. It is therapeutic even when you don't catch fish and fishing in such a beautiful area is the icing on the cake.

In addition to interviewing my buddy Bill, I also decided to contact another local and long time Omena resident and outdoorsman, Marlin Bussey. After all, anyone named "Marlin" must know something about fishing, right? He told me he got his name when he hooked his first 300 pound marlin on Omena Bay back in the early 40s. Just kidding. Pay attention.

Marlin truly is knowledgeable on the subject of regional waterfowl and fish. He is well-versed on wildlife subjects from perch to walleye and mergansers to buffleheads. He has fished the area since he was a young man and still does. Unfortunately, many of the fish he used to catch are no longer in the area or are now very scarce. Lately, he says, even the salmon have been harder to find due to the shortage of their primary food source, a non-indigenous species of herring from the Atlantic called the alewife. The first time I heard the term "alewife", I thought it was referring to a wife that dutifully brought you another beer when yours was empty. Non-indigenous salmon were introduced into the Great Lakes to control the over-populating alewives. Guess that worked out better than they thought because now they are running out of the alewives. One non-indigenous fish was brought in to eradicate another non-indigenous fish. I guess it worked so well they are both in decline.

Today, fishing on Omena Bay produces small mouth bass, an occasional salmon, whitefish, lake trout, walleye, steelhead, perch and maybe even an occasional brown trout. Marlin said a few years back, he routinely caught brown trout on the edge of the drop-off in Omena Bay.

As I said before, it isn't just about catching fish. It is the anticipation and act of fishing that makes it fun. It's about spending time with your buddies while fishing for bragging rights around the campfire that night. So grab your pole and tackle box filled with lures, line and lead. Have your "alewife" throw a few beers in the cooler, along with a sandwich and some chips and let's go fishing! Looking out on Omena Bay, how can anyone resist?

\$1.00 a vote, residency and ID are not required. The new mayor will be announced following the Mayor's Parade on July 25.

Last year we expanded our educational programs by offering a series of summer classes. The classes were very successful and will be offered again this year. Co-Directors Lynn Spitznagel and Doni Lystra have again put together an exciting line-up. Returning from last summer are Mary Smart with flower arranging and Mary Loveless with fairy houses. Instructors from last year who will teach new subjects are Nancy Fitzgerald with poetry, Sarah Chenault with sweetgrass baskets, and Paula McMenamy with beading. New offerings are Jacquie Johnson with handcrafted cards, Char Bickel with painted silk collage, Gail Koch with acrylic painting, Julie Sanco with watercolor painting, and Peg Rod with Mah Jongg. The schedule of classes will be offered to Caretaker Members ahead of the general public. You will have a first come advantage and a discounted class fee. The classes have proven to be a fun learning experience and a great way to introduce members of our community to OHS and our Museum.

We begin our Summer Program series on July 2, 4:00PM, with a **Tour of Omena Hilltop Cemetery** lead by Chris Verdery. Chris has spent most of his summers in Omena and has become an expert on the history of the cemetery and the families who are buried there. On July 23, at 4:00PM, John Nelson will present his program, **"The Significance of Woolsey Airport."** Our final program will be the **Annual Meeting** at Shady Trails Camp on August 16 at 4:00PM. The program **"Three Soldiers from Omena: Native Americans in the Civil War"** will be offered by noted historian, Chris Czopek. A special thanks to Program Chair Doni Lystra for putting the series together.

None of this would be possible without the dedicated efforts of our OHS board and committee members. They contribute many volunteer hours to serve as docents, plan and coordinate special programs and summer classes, publish *Timelines*, membership campaigns, publicity, fundraising, our website, and so much more. This year we welcome two new board members, Dennis Armbruster and Kathy Miller.

I look forward to seeing all of you at our Opening Reception as we begin our third decade.

Helen Putnam Bradley  
President



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